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SUBJECT: ARAB NATIONS CREATE REGIONAL NETWORK TO FACILITATE
JUDICIAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: At a high-level conference of judicial and prosecutorial authorities from 22 Arab states, held in Doha on April 27 and 28, participants agreed to create a new liaison organization to help facilitate mutual legal assistance and extradition among their countries. The Government of Qatar offered to host a secretariat for this new network, which is inspired by the European experience with EUROJUST. During a press conference held on the first day of the conference, the French Minister of Justice and Qatari Attorney General announced a bilateral exchange of judicial authorities and a joint training program for Qatari judges. The State/INL observer to the conference met on the margins with the Minister of Justice of Jordan, who is seeking help with his desire to reorganize the powers of Jordan's new anticorruption commission. He also met with the Qatari Attorney General to discuss bilateral cooperation in the planning for two premier international anticorruption events that Qatar will host in late 2009. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) Embassy Amman -see paragraph 7.

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

¶3. (U) The Government of Qatar (GOQ) and the Government of France co-sponsored the Second Regional Conference on Justice (Second Conference), held in Doha on April 27-28. Representatives attended from 22 Arab states and territories, including 15 Ministers of Justice and 20 Prosecutors General

from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Comoros, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Djibouti and Libya. Participants included experts from the UN Development Program-POGAR, UN Office of Drugs and Crime and Arab League. John Brandolino, Senior Advisor at UNVIE for State/INL, and Jeffrey Cole, DOJ Regional Attache located in Cairo, attended as guests of Qatari Attorney General Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri.

¶4. (U) The Second Conference was a follow-up to a similar conference in 2004 that sought to discuss basic and common principles found in French and Arab legal systems. Organizers accomplished their goal of establishing an organization that will help facilitate mutual legal assistance and extradition among the participant countries. This organization is inspired by the European's experience with EUROJUST. The event included a presentation by Jose Luis Lopes da Motan, President of EUROJUST, on the workings of that particular body. Qatar has offered to host a secretariat for this new Arab organization.

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¶5. (U) Qatari Attorney General Al Marri and French Minister of Justice Rachida Dati, following their opening statements, held a joint press conference to announce a formal program for judicial exchanges between the two countries. They will begin this cooperation with the respective placement of long-term resident judges within each other's country. They also announced that they will co-sponsor a judicial training center for Qatari judges that will involve French trainers.

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¶6. (U) Three panel sessions over the two-day conference discussed the structures and experiences of judicial and prosecutorial authorities in various participant countries, and focused specifically on the concept of separation of powers, relationship between judicial authorities and the police and the use of specialized authorities. Participants recognized that the existing tools for judicial cooperation among these countries, which included the Riyadh Convention, were outdated and could use upgrading.

¶7. (SBU) The State/INL rep was approached on the margins by Jordan Minister of Justice Aiman Odeh and Ammar Al-Husseini, Director for International Cooperation at the Ministry, who is seeking advice on his desire to disengage prosecutorial powers from Jordan's relatively new national anticorruption commission. The commission was apparently created with the expectation that it would prosecute, as well as investigate, corruption cases. He is now finding it difficult to develop prosecutorial functions within the commission which are wholly separate from the regular judicial/prosecutorial authorities in that country. He thinks it would be best to keep the prosecutorial functions consolidated and subject to existing ethics and other standards and controls. The Minister is concerned, however, that any move to extract prosecutorial functions from the commission might violate the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) (Comment: It does not. UNCAC discusses creation of anticorruption commissions that are independent and have proper resources, but leaves it to individual countries to determine which powers it will give to such commissions. End comment) and that such a move will be perceived badly by the international community. The State/INL rep promised to provide information on other anticorruption commissions and to follow up with Al Hussein, who has worked with State/INL rep in the past on UN-related anti-crime issues in Vienna.

¶8. (U) The State/INL rep also met on the margins with Attorney General Al Marri to discuss preparations for the UNCAC Third Conference of States Parties (COSP) and the Sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption (GF VI), which the GOQ has agreed to host in November or December of 2009. Attorney

General Al Marri assured Brandolino that the GOQ agreed with the USG positions shared with Attorney General Al Marri on April 10 visit to Doha by State/INL Director David Luna. He agreed that GF VI should be the final Global Forum and with our vision on how these two events should be structured. He pledged to work closely with the USG as they prepare for these two major international anticorruption events.

¶9. (SBU) In a separate meeting with Dr. P.F. Rau, a Yale-educated Indian advisor to Attorney General Al Marri on international affairs, Rau provided insights into the operations of the AG's office. He expressed confidence that AG Al Mari would find the necessary resources to make these anticorruption events a success. He advised the USG to be a visible but patient partner, and promised to help serve as a liaison between the USG and Attorney General Al Marri.

¶10. (U) COMMENT: Qatar and the participant countries must now translate the conclusions of the conference into a process that will help strengthen judicial cooperation on a practical level. France's representatives are pleased with its coordinating role in this effort, which they hope will strengthen bilateral and regional judicial cooperation and cast the French system and EUROJUST as examples worthy of

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regional attention.

¶11. The GOQ's sponsorship of the Second Conference and their plans to host the UNCAC COSP and GF VI in 2009 is evidence of their, and particularly Attorney General Al Marri's, interest in creating a role for Qatar in the international justice scene. State/INL will work closely over the next eighteen months with Embassy Doha and Attorney General Al Marri to prepare for COSP and GF VI, and ensure that their substance and process for these events coincides with our vision for the two events. END COMMENT
RATNEY